

Montreal, September 15, 2018,

To the attention of the judge presiding over the trial of Wendy Hechtman,

I apologize for sending this letter and not testifying in person in front of the court. The distance, work and family obligations make it difficult. I however wanted to share this letter with you.

My name is Patrice Blais. I live in Montreal, Canada. I teach law in the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University and I also practice law in Montreal. I have been married to Wendy Heitmann (Hechtman) for a period of 10 years. She is the mother of our two children, Charles and Theodore, who are currently of age 9 and 7.

It is with mixed emotions that I am writing this letter. The emotions combine disappointment, pity, and sadness.

Disappointment because of the poor choices that Wendy made. She took our separation very painfully and made terrible choices not to feel her pain. She became sick to a terrible addiction that is plaguing our society. I understand she is seeking and/or under treatment and wish that she will be able to complete that after she is transferred from the current detention facility.

Pity because I wish things ended up differently. I wish that she would have lived up to her potential. She is a smart woman, an excellent English writer and she also comes up with brilliant business ideas. From a dog walking business, to have a service to accompany people (mainly women) who were lonely and needed emotional support for tough meetings (meeting with the authorities, going to an abortion clinic, court etc...) she had more than good ideas. The following up was difficult as if she was afraid of succeeding. Her self-esteem issues made her blind to her own potential. She would get hired in many jobs but did not believe enough in herself to keep them.

She is now in a foreign country (she is from Nebraska but Montreal is where all her 4 children are)

Sadness occurs when I think of Charles and Theodore. She held those babies, breastfed them for as long as she could, and saw them through those marvelous milestones of their little baby lives. She has now already missed many of their milestones. While I sought sole custody for obvious pragmatic reasons, I was never worried about how she would treat the kids and we did not have disagreements over parental authority following our separation when we shared parenting in Montreal.

Following the guilty plea that was entered in August 2018, Anna (my new partner) and myself decided it was time to explain to Charles and Theodore what is happening with their mother. We had that difficult conversation recently on September 1, 2018. Charles understands what is going on more than Theodore. As time passes they will have to grow older and live with this reality their entire lives. This will unfortunately be that of their story. I am sad for them because I wish they did not have to grow up being away from their mother. I wish I never had to have this conversation with them. It used to make me angry as well but anger is gone by now. I am trying to find the positive in all of this, it is hard to see but it must exist.

I do believe as well in the values of compassion, forgiveness, recovery and in second chances. Charles and Theodore will spend most of their young lives without their mother. There is little hope that they can see her before they are full grown adults. I know, more so being a lawyer, that I will find harsh the sentence you are about to render, especially by Canadian standards. Though the United States and Canada are different jurisdictions in regard to criminal law, I do believe that the values of compassion, forgiveness and that having a second chance go beyond our respective countries borders. I hope and humbly ask that they will guide you in your decision and that you will show clemency to Wendy and allow her, to be once again, a productive member for society, have a chance at redemption and be closer to her children since being a mother is a lifelong commitment.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrice Blais". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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